



Newsletter provided by the
SC Department of Agriculture

South Carolina Department of Agriculture



Eat Smart...It's in the Garden

Junior League of Columbia 1
Garden at Jubilee

Doby's Mill Elementary 1
School Update

Farm to School at the 2
2011 SC State Fair

Wellness Works for Kids of 2
Self Regional Healthcare

Legare Farm Update 3

Clemson Sandhill REC 3

A New Kind of Harvest 4

Defeating the Garden Beast 5

Richland Farm-City Week 6
Celebrations

Junior League of Columbia Garden at Jubilee Academy

By: Elizabeth Shuler

The Junior League of Columbia is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

This past spring the Junior League partnered with Jubilee Academy in Columbia, SC. They helped implement the Kids in the Kitchen initiative, a series of lessons leading to practicing healthier eating habits through gardening.

Junior League members helped in the classrooms as students were taught how to grow food from seeds and with transplants and the importance of composting. Members also



assisted in the construction of the raised beds.

On planting day, Carolina Children's Garden Education Program Coordinator, Chanda Cooper and her team of master gardener volunteers helped the students install their seeds and transplants into the raised beds.



While the plants were maturing, the students went on a field trip to visit the South Carolina State Farmers Market. They had the opportunity to buy local produce to contribute to their meals at home.

In May, at the end of the program, parents joined the students for a Harvest Dinner. The school plans to continue this program as repetition will keep kids eating healthy!

Doby's Mill Elementary

By Holly Harring

On a recent Saturday in September, Doby's Mill teachers and students assisted local chef, Scott Freiberg, in preparing healthy foods at the Eat Smart Move More tent at the Kershaw County Farmers Market. Using only ingredients found at the market, the crew prepared peach parfaits, mountain apple pancakes and vegetable fritattas.

In addition, Doby's Mill held a Health, Fitness, and Conservation Fair on October 11. The fair had healthy foods, community services and a fitness event on the stage. The Farm to School Staff attended and made mini-greenhouses with the students. Students were able to plant radish seeds and take the greenhouses home. Finally, the Media Center has used funds from the Farm to School Grant to purchase dozens of books on gardening and healthy cooking and eating.

Upcoming Events

- Clemson Extension Canning Workshop: Holiday Gifts from the Kitchen. Corbett Building, State Farmers Market.

- December 19, 2011, 10:00am-2:00pm, cost is \$20.00/ per person. Contact Nancy Harrison at 803.874.2352 x113



Farm to School Exhibit at the 2011 SC State Fair!!!

By: Elizabeth Shuler

This past October, the State Fair brought approximately 50,000 people through the Cantey Building, and the SC Department of Agriculture's exhibit, showcasing South Carolina agriculture. This year's exhibit featured interactive and educational experiences from members of our South Carolina Specialty Food Association, staff members from the Department of Agriculture, Fresh on the Menu cooking demonstrations, and the new Farm to School display.

The Farm to School exhibit allowed children and their parents to learn more about the Farm to School program. There were activi-

ties for the kids and staff on location to discuss topics such as healthy school lunch choices, school gardens, and eating local.



Serving Bar for school lunch program.

Part of the Farm to School initiative is to incorporate two local produce items each month into the school lunch menu. The new exhibit at the State Fair showcased a school lunch line and some of the

healthy, local choices they could offered in their school lunch programs. The exhibit included the raw vegetables along with pictures of the cooked vegetable.

"The Farm to School program's objectives are serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutritional education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers," says Holly Harring, the Statewide Farm to School Coordinator.

The SC Farm to School program is in 52 schools across the state. The State Fair was an excellent opportunity to share the importance of this program to the public.



Cotton Display



Tractor Display

Wellness Works for Kids of Self Regional Healthcare

By: Amanda Morgan

The Wellness Works for Kids program of Self Regional Healthcare has a desire not only to teach children how to eat healthy foods but to live a complete healthy lifestyle by growing their own foods. Wellness Works for Kids received a \$500 garden grant with Greenwood's Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

The Grant provided over

600 Woodfield's Elementary students with their own tomato seeds to put in small biodegradable starter pots. This coordinated school health program teaches healthy lifestyle improvement through the entire school year at different elementary schools in the Lakelands area.

The students were instructed on how to care for their tomato plant, and observed a demonstration for



making their own salsa with the tomatoes they were learning to grow. After students were taught how to make a homemade salsa, they were able to taste the salsa with healthy baked chips. The grant allowed the program to help the students make the connection between growing their own fresh vegetables and cooking with those fresh ingredients. Following the sampling of the salsa, the stu-

dents participated in a high tempo, Latin based, salsa dance. By incorporating the salsa dance the students were able to understand how eating healthy and exercising go hand in hand.

For more information contact: Amanda Morgan or Otis McAlhany as 864.725.4665
amorgan@selfregional.org
otis.mcalhay@selfregional.org



Farming Update from Legare Farms *by Helen Legare-Floyd*

Every month, Helen writes a monthly update talking about all of the goings-on at her family farm, Legare Farms in Johns Island, SC. Check out these excerpts from her monthly newsletter.

Pumpkin Patch and Maze

This year's Pumpkin Patch and Maze were great; we had a record number of visitors. This year's maze game was about farm animals and we hope everyone that visited the maze learned something new about farm animals. We added a couple of new fea-

tures this year; the duck races, the cow train, and we included gems with our fossil mining.

Fall Harvest Dinner

Our Fall Harvest Dinner was a wonderful success again this year, thanks mostly to our fabulous chefs but also thanks to all of you that attended. Thank goodness the weather was perfect this year. Make plans to attend next year, it's always a great event!

CSA Report

We finished up our 2011 CSA vegetable deliveries mid-

November. Fall was a much easier growing season which is unusual because this time of year can be a difficult time to grow vegetables. We have a couple of months now to breathe before we start planting for the 2012 CSA. We are already taking memberships so sign up today!



New at the Farm

Our pork is finally at the farm! Here are the cuts available: bacon, center cut pork chop, uncured ham slices and roast, pork loin roast, shoulder roast, sausage, and ribs.

Christmas Gifts

We have many items that will make great Christmas Presents. Our Gift Certificates can be used on anything we sell or do. CSA Memberships are also great! Our gift boxes, individual jars of canned food, fruit trees, nursery plants and concrete statuary are great options, too!

Clemson Sandhill REC Revisits Its Roots

By Stan Perry

Over 2,500 students visited the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center during the month of October, many discovering for the first time the impact of agriculture on their lives. The Clemson Sandhill REC puts its agriculture heritage on display, much to the delight of the eager visitors.

Three main components comprised the month long celebration. Each weekday welcomed students from pre-school through second grade to narrated hayride, child sized corn maze, tour of the Carolina Children's Garden, a hands on pumpkin and plant life station and perhaps the most popular of all, the farm themed playground area. All station experiences, except the playground, were led by a variety of dedicated instruc-

tors and incorporated portions of the South Carolina teaching standards.

Pumpkin, gourds, mums, straw, Clemson Sandhill grown pecans, corn stalks and other agricultural products were for sale most days. The majority of the agricultural products sold were purchased from the vendors at the South Carolina State Farmers Market. For many of the visitors



this served as their first exposure to the wildly shaped and colorful heritage pumpkins and gourds.

The last three Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings of the month welcomed families to the Clemson Sandhill Fall Festival. The festival consisted of a longer version of the popular narrated hayride, petting zoo, lighted full size corn maze, pumpkin patch and for the brave souls in each group, the Haunted Forest. Laughter rivaled screams as children of all ages enjoyed the scared and surprises the forest trail offered.

The festival, children's programs and roadside sales could not have been accomplished without the volunteer organizations that participated: Richland County Master Gardeners, Simply Students, the South Carolina

State Guard, the Sparkleberry Fair Executive Committee, Ernie the Keebler Elf, the famous Chick-Fil-A cow and the many Clemson employees, family members and friends that provided support.

For more information on the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center visit their website:

www.clemson.edu/public/rec/sandhill

**900 Clemson Road
Columbia, South
Carolina 29229**

803.788.5700



A New Kind of Harvest

By: Reece Lyerly

Today's community gardens, reminiscent of Victory Gardens of the past, are quickly challenging and changing American food culture. And Gardening for Good, a newly minted program led by Greenville Forward, is on the path toward creating a network for community gardens that will communicate, advocate, and share resources to support this community-driven food movement.

Americans have recently gained a strong interest in learning more about the food they eat and how it is produced. The popularity and success of Whole Foods, EarthFare, and local farmers' markets, not to mention Michelle Obama's White House Garden, reflects a growing, national trend. And, due to the high prices of quality, organic produce and sustainability raised meat, many Americans are returning to their roots in order to establish healthier diets and lifestyles.

Just as "Victory Gardens" sprang up during World War II, backyard gardens, urban gardens, school gardens and community gardens are forming across the country, includ-

ing the Upstate. In my four years as a student at Furman University, I observed a dramatic shift towards a more sustainable and locally sourced retail food environment in Greenville. This shift included an explosion of farmers' market vendors, restaurants featuring produce from local farmers, and CSAs. In fact, the recent Urban Farm Tour sponsored by Greenville Organic Food Organization (GOFO), with more than 25 gardens, including 3 school gardens, and 700 participants, radically demonstrates that Greenville is truly a flourishing environment from the local food movement.

In response to this rapid expansion of local gardening and food education in Greenville County, Gardening for Good is a new community partnership, under the guidance of Greenville Forward, which establishes a collaborative community garden network. The goals of Gardening for Good are to cultivate public participation in gardens, strengthen community ties, and promote access to healthy and affordable foods. This network includes both existing and potential community gardens, as well as garden resource distributors offering materials, services, and education.

Gardening for Good's mission is to foster communication, promote exchange of knowledge, facilitate stewardship of resources, and support advocacy efforts among Greenville County garden initiatives. Overall, Garden-

ing for Good is a forum for community garden members and advocates to preserve, promote, and create a more robust local food system.

In an effort to celebrate the diversity of community gardens, the Gardening for Good network includes *any piece of land gardenized by a group of people*, including school gardens. School gardens provide the unique opportunity to integrate garden education

school gardens across Greenville County.

In the words of Michael Pollan, "the garden suggests there might be a place where we can meet nature halfway." In this way, as Gardening for Good connects and expands community garden efforts in Greenville, may we each learn to get our hands dirty in the garden, return to our roots and reap a new kind of harvest for our local community.



into the classroom and extracurricular activities and excite youth about connecting with nature. Gardening for Good understands the often transient nature of school gardens due to curriculum, summer break, and student/faculty/parent interest. Therefore, Gardening for Good seeds to provide a network to connect school gardens for years to come. In addition, Gardening for Good provides resources such as garden materials (seeds, compost, tools, etc), grant research and education seminars to support

If you are interested in learning more about Gardening for Good or registering your garden as a member of the network, please visit our website at www.ggardeningforgood.com or www.facebook.com/ggardeningforgood.

Reece Lyerly is the Greenville Forward Gardening for Good Fellow and is a recent graduate from Furman University as an Earth and Environmental Science Major. He can be reached at reece@ggardeningforgood.com or by calling 864.239.3709.

Defeating the Garden Beast

By: Todd Beasley

The school garden movement, while thriving and hopefully attempting to promote a 'localvore' movement, is not a new concept by any means. It is simply cyclical; gaining momentum and interest approximately every thirty years when a new environmental era begins – exemplified by the last century having three movements of school gardens: During the Dust Bowl era and John Dewey, Rachel Carson's 1960s DDT period, and the most current which began in the 90s with the buzz words 'global warming', 'sustainability', and 'green'. Thus the goal in education and within school garden creation is not to reinvent the wheel but to make a better wheel. With limited available funding that is often competitive, educators must be cognizant when applying for the creation of a new garden that in order to defeat the grant beast, they must be creative in their efforts. Logistically, educators are aware of the ease in which gardens can connect back to the curricula. In essence, it is imperative that educators apply for garden creation in a manner that demonstrates four key concepts: First, the name of the project needs to be catchy. Secondly, the garden, more importantly than connecting to the curricula, needs to support the main goals of environmental education which is to change or create the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of students in developing a new generation of environmental

stewards. Third, the power of partnerships weighs heavily. Lastly, the garden must demonstrate that it can be self sustaining or require minimal care while enhancing or restoring habitat.

**Heathwood Hall
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL™**
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Using this method, Heathwood Hall Episcopal School has created nine gardens from awarded grants since 2006 which include: 2 rain gardens, a xeric parking lot island garden, riparian garden along a pond, native tree alley, native garden, butterfly garden, Native American Medicine Wheel, and an additional raised vegetable garden. We have recently been funded to revamp a storm water pond with native plants as well. Our creations have fallen under the umbrella of what I have typically called the 'Treasured Places From Wasted Spaces' project. The concept behind this project has been to transform seemingly wasted areas common to many school campuses into viable learning sites: parking lot islands, ditches, storm water ponds, gutters and downspouts, compacted land between buildings, and power line right-of-ways. With snazzy project titles like 'SWAMPERS' (Students Working At Mending Ponds: Environmentally, Responsibly, Sustainably), these sites are used with already existing curricula as many organizations frown upon creating a new curriculum when there are plenty that are in existence

and highly underutilized. Examples of these are Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, Project Wet, Ag in the Classroom and Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow. They are designed to reconnect kids to nature and promote stewardship and sustainability. A growing advantage is the ability to partner with local and region environmental organizations and educational institutions or if possible, nontraditional sources such as insurance companies or railroad companies that want to give back to the community. Express and be able to demonstrate effectively the following: Proper plant selection and timing of planting (fall) saves a lot of work and water later on. Go native if you can – habitat restoration/enhancement. Don't fight the sight. Reduce soil amendments - use leaves (kids can rake) as your mulch along with pine straw. Show that you will stretch your budget by purchasing wholesale as many wholesalers are very open to selling to schools. Please consider contacting Heathwood Hall staff if you would like to learn more about our projects.



Two examples of the successes from our gardens funded by grants are our Native American Medicine Wheel and our new raised vegetable garden. In the academic year 2009-2010, the school was funded, using the process above, \$5000 from

two grants. Partnering with Dr. Will Goins, Chief Executive of the Cherokee Nation, we designed a 4200 square foot garden in the traditional design of Easter Woodland and Cherokee Indians. We then partnered with Vulcan Materials and received a hefty amount of donated granite



for the outline and pathways. Wholesale plant purchases allowed us to obtain over 1000 plants for less than \$2000. The site is flourishing, requires only to be cut back after perennials die in the late fall, and can be seen from Google Earth! The other successful example, our new raised vegetable area was completed in the summer of 2010. Over 250 pounds of fresh vegetables have been produced from this area in less than two growing seasons with most of this being donated to Harvest Hope, one of our partners. A little of the harvest has found its way to our cafeteria, such as a nice picking of juicy radishes that were transformed into a delicious radish aioli that was the perfect compliment for baked potato and an excellent reward for those wishing to reap the benefits of their hard work in the creation of this garden!

Richland Farm-City Week Celebrations Culminate in Award Cookout

By: Chanda Cooper

Over 65 students, teachers, and schools received awards at the 2011 Farm-City Week Award Cookout at the Clemson Sandhill REC Lakehouse on December 1. For many, this cookout was the culmination of weeks of study about farming and sustainable agriculture. Following a welcome by Farm-City Committee Chairman Tom Willingham, SC Department of Agriculture General Counsel Beth Crocker provided congratulations and remarks to the winners. "It is wonderful to see so many young people participating in Farm-City Week events," Crocker said.

The theme for this year's Farm-City Week was sustainable agriculture, and students in grades K-12 participated in a series of competitions designed to raise their awareness of agriculture and their understanding of sustainable farming practices. Several schools distinguished themselves in this year's competitions, including Langford Elementary and Horrell Hill Elementary, which each received awards in seven categories. Horrell Hill was also recognized as the home of this year's School Coordinator of the Year, Mrs. Mary Jade Haney.

Farm-City Week is an annual national observance of the importance of agriculture and the interdependence between urban and rural communities. In Richland County, Farm-City Week activities are sponsored by the Farm-City Committee and the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD). Richland County Council issued a special proclamation recognizing Farm-City Week (November 18-24) last month.

Photos

Top: Over 150 people attended the 2011 Richland County Farm-City Week Awards Cookout

Middle: Chanda Cooper (left) and Beth Crocker (right) presented the School Coordinator of the Year Award to Mary Jade Haney (center), a teacher at Horrell Hill Elementary.

Bottom: Richland Farm-City Committee Chairman, Tom Willingham, congratulated this year's winners and thanked those who helped make this year's Farm-City Week celebrations a success.



South Carolina Department of Agriculture



Wade Hampton Building
PO Box 11280
Columbia, SC 29211-1280
Phone: 803-734-2210
Fax: 803-734-2192

We're on the Web!

www.agriculture.sc.gov

www.scschoolgardens.blogspot.com



School Gardens Program

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture started the School Garden initiative to provide schools and communities alike with the opportunity to learn healthy eating habits, as well as providing an effective and fun way to instill the appreciation for local agriculture and food production in our children and everyone else involved in the garden. Incorporating the health benefits of garden-ing activity with the educa-tional process of develop-ment reinforces the Depart-ment of Agriculture's goals related to promoting the con-sumption of locally grown products.



For more information about the S.C. School Gardens program and to share information about your school garden program, contact:

Beth Crocker, (803) 734-2193, bcrocker@scda.sc.gov.

Photos from Burgess Elementary School Garden

